

Preview: MFT5604 : Family Law and Ethics

Syllabus

Course Overview

In this course you will explore the role and functions of family law within the context of clinical practice. You will explore the ethical code of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT). You will further your understanding of the distinctions between legal and ethical issues in clinical practice.

Though there are only five units in this course, grades will be posted at the end of the 10-week quarter.

Competencies and Accreditation

<i>MFT5604 Course Competencies</i>	<i>Version 12 COAMFTE Standards</i>
<p>1. Design research that will contribute to the formulation of best practice strategies when working with family therapy clients.</p> <p>Assessed by:</p> <p>u01a1: Topic Approval.</p> <p>u03a1: Referencing the Literature.</p> <p>u04a1: Draft Research Paper.</p> <p>u05a1: Family Practice Research Paper.</p>	<p>FCA 2: Clinical Treatment With Individuals, Couples, and Families.</p> <p>FCA 3: Diverse, Multicultural and/or Underserved Communities.</p> <p>FCA 4: Research and Evaluation.</p>

MFT5604 Course Competencies	Version 12 COAMFTE Standards
	<p data-bbox="1279 235 1484 1365"><i>SLO-1. Knowledge and Research: Effectively integrate and apply research and theories in the practice of marriage and family therapy, including individual, systemic, and relational theories; theories of individual and family development across the lifespan.</i></p> <p data-bbox="1279 1411 1484 2011"><i>SLO-2. Diversity and Multicultural Competence: Demonstrate knowledge of culturally and ethnically sensitive matters in a variety of settings integrating</i></p>

MFT5604 Course Competencies	Version 12 COAMFTE Standards
	<i>concepts of advocacy and social justice.</i>
<p>2. Design research that will contribute to the delivery of culturally sensitive and ethically sound services to family therapy clients.</p> <p>Assessed by:</p> <p>u01a1: Topic Approval.</p> <p>u03a1: Referencing the Literature.</p> <p>u04a1: Draft Research Paper.</p> <p>u05a1: Family Practice Research Paper.</p>	<p>FCA 2: Clinical Treatment With Individuals, Couples, and Families.</p> <p>FCA 3: Diverse, Multicultural and/or Underserved Communities.</p> <p>FCA 4: Research and Evaluation.</p> <p>FCA 5: Professional Identity, Law, Ethics, and Social Responsibility.</p> <p><i>SLO-1. Knowledge and Research: Effectively integrate and apply</i></p>

MFT5604 Course Competencies	Version 12 COAMFTE Standards
	<p><i>research and theories in the practice of marriage and family therapy, including individual, systemic, and relational theories; theories of individual and family development across the lifespan.</i></p> <p><i>SLO-2. Diversity and Multicultural Competence: Demonstrate knowledge of culturally and ethnically sensitive matters in a variety of settings, integrating concepts of advocacy and social justice.</i></p> <p><i>SLO-4. Ethics: Understand</i></p>

MFT5604 Course Competencies	Version 12 COAMFTE Standards
	<i>and apply the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy code of ethics.</i>
<p>3. Communicate in a manner that is scholarly, professional, and consistent with expectations for members of the marriage and family therapy profession.</p> <p>Assessed by:</p> <p>u01a1: Topic Approval.</p> <p>u03a1: Referencing the Literature.</p> <p>u04a1: Draft Research Paper.</p> <p>u05a1: Family Practice Research Paper.</p>	

Course Competencies

(Read Only)

To successfully complete this course, you will be expected to:

- 1 Design research that will contribute to the formulation of best practice strategies when working with family therapy clients.
- 2 Design research that will contribute to the delivery of culturally sensitive and ethically sound services to family therapy clients.
- 3 Communicate in a manner that is scholarly, professional, and consistent with expectations for members of the marriage and family therapy profession.

Course Prerequisites

Prerequisite: MFT5217 or MFT5222.

Required

The materials listed below are required to complete the learning activities in this course.

External Resource

Please note that URLs change frequently. While the URLs were current when this course was designed, some may no longer be valid. If you cannot access a specific link, contact your instructor for an alternative URL. Permissions for the following links have been either granted or deemed appropriate for educational use at the time of course publication.

- American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT). (2015). [Code of ethics](https://www.aamft.org/Legal_Ethics/Code_of_Ethics.aspx). Retrieved from https://www.aamft.org/Legal_Ethics/Code_of_Ethics.aspx

Suggested

Optional

The following optional materials are offered to provide you with a better understanding of the topics in this course. These materials are not required to complete the course.

Integrated Materials

Book

G., Corey, M. S., & Callanan, P. (2011). *Issues and ethics in the helping professions*(8th ed.). Belmont, CA: Cengage. ISBN: 9780495812418.

Houser, R., Wilczenski, F. L., & Ham, M. (2006). *Culturally relevant ethical decision-making in counseling*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. ISBN: 9781412905879.

M. G., & Saks, S. (2008). *Contemporary issues in family law and mental health*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publisher. ISBN: 9780398078102.

Mosten, F. S. (2009). *Collaborative divorce handbook: Helping families without going to court*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. ISBN: 9780470395196.

Pope, K. S., & Vasquez, M. T. (2011). *Ethics in psychotherapy and counseling: A practical guide* (4th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley. ISBN: 9780470633076.

Rave, E. J., & Larsen, C. C. (Eds.). (1995). *Ethical decision making in therapy: Feminist perspectives*(pp.18–37). New York, NY: Guilford. ISBN: 9780898620894.

Wilcoxon, S. A., Remley, T. P., Jr., & Gladding, S. T. (2014). *Ethical, legal, and professional issues in the practice of marriage and family therapy* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. ISBN: 9780133377446.

Library

The following optional readings may be available in the Capella University Library. To find specific readings by journal or book title, use [Journal and Book Locator](#). Refer to the [Journal and Book Locator library guide](#) to learn how to use this tool. If the full text is not available, you may be able to request a copy through the [Interlibrary Loan](#) service.

- American Psychological Association. (2007). Record keeping guidelines. *American Psychologist*, 62(9), 993–1004.
- Brendel, J. M., & Nelson, K. W. (1999). The stream of family secrets: Navigating the islands of confidentiality and triangulation involving family therapists. *The Family Journal*, 7(2), 112–117.
- Chaytor, D. (2007). Ethics helpdesk. *Therapy Today*, 18(7), 53.
- Fanibanda, D. (1976). Ethical issues of mental health consultation. *Professional Psychology*, 7(4), 547–552.
- Haug, I. (2002). Demystifying the AAMFT code of ethics: Principle two: Confidentiality. *Family Therapy Magazine*, 1(1), 48–55.
- Hermann, M., & Herlihy, B. (2006). Legal and ethical implications of refusing to counsel homosexual couples. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 84(4), 414–418.
- Hillerbrand, E., & Claiborn, C. (1988). Ethical knowledge exhibited by clients and nonclients. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 19(5), 527–531.
- Knapp, S., & VandeCreek, L. (2008). The ethics of advertising, billing, and finances in psychotherapy. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 64(5), 613–625.
- McCurdy, K. G., & Murray, K. C. (2003). Confidentiality issues when minor children disclose family secrets in family counseling. *The Family Journal*, 11(4), 393–398.
- Miller, D., & Thelen, M. (1986). Knowledge and beliefs about confidentiality in psychotherapy. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 17(1), 15–19.
- Newman, J., Gray, E., & Fuqua, D. (1996). Beyond ethical decision making. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 48(4), 230–236.
- Pack-Brown, S., Thomas, T., & Seymour, J. (2008). Infusing professional ethics into counselor education programs: A multicultural/social justice perspective. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 86(3), 296–302.

- Patten, C., Barnett, T., & Houlihan, D. (1991). Ethics in marital and family therapy: A review of the literature. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 22(2), 171–175.
- Robinson, E., & Curry, J. (2008). Institutional review boards and professional counseling research. *Counseling and Values*, 53(1), 39–52.
- Sobocinski, M. (1990). Ethical principles in the counseling of gay and lesbian adolescents: Issues of autonomy, competence, and confidentiality. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 21(4), 240–247.
- Sommer, C. (2008). Vicarious traumatization, trauma-sensitive supervision, and counselor preparation. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 48(1), 61–71.
- Stratton, J., & Smith, R. (2006). Supervision of couples cases. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, 43(3), 337–348.
- Swetz, K., Crowley, M., Hook, C., & Mueller, P. (2007). Report of 255 clinical ethics consultations and review of the literature. *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, 82(6), 686–691.
- Urofsky, R., Engels, D., & Engebretson, K. (2008). Kitchener's principle ethics: Implications for counseling practice and research. *Counseling and Values*, 53(1), 67–78.
- Vasquez, M., Bingham, R., & Barnett, J. (2008). Psychotherapy termination: Clinical and ethical responsibilities. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 64(5), 653–665.

Projects

Project >> Family Practice Research Paper

Project Overview

The final project for this course consists of an 8–10 page research paper—Family Practice Research Paper—that will pertain to the ethical and legal considerations of a topic in the area of family therapy.

In Unit 1 you will submit for approval a topic for your paper, and in Unit 5 you will submit the final paper.

As you choose your topic, give special consideration to how you will address the ethical and legal components of the topic. Also, consider how the topic will help you meet the needs of your state licensing requirements.

Some topics considered by previous learners have included: aspects of divorce, arbitration and mitigation, blended families, juvenile justice system, emancipation of minors, children's issues (abuse, neglect, truancy, foster care, adoption), and other topics related to legal and ethical considerations in the area of family therapy.

Your paper must do the following:

- Identify how this inquiry would substantially benefit the field and the client population.
- Improve the delivery of culturally sensitive and ethically sound services to clients.
- Inform empirically based practice.
- Identify research methods that can be used to answer clearly formulated research questions related to the client population in the identified topic area.

In this paper, you will need to identify how the research would be conducted, but you will not actually be conducting the research. Instead, it should be written to set the stage for possible future research in your identified area of inquiry.

Include the following sections in your paper:

- Title Page.
- Introduction (purpose of the study, need for the study, and questions for research).
- Review of Current Literature (analysis of foundational knowledge, current practices, and developing trends).
- Research Methods. This section may discuss existing research methods located in the literature, or your proposed research methods supported by the literature.
- Anticipated Findings. This section should include potential benefits to the client population, contributions to the field, and the potential of your findings to help formulate best practices and the delivery of culturally sensitive ethically sound services to clients. Although you will not conduct the actual research, you will be expected to anticipate and articulate how this new knowledge will benefit the client population you intend to work with.
- APA-style reference list with at least 10 empirical references from within the past 5 years.

Submission Requirements

- **Written communication:** Written communication is free of errors that detract from the overall message.
- **APA formatting:** Resources and citations are formatted according to current [APA style and formatting](#).
- **Number of resources:** Minimum of 10 resources.
- **Length of paper:** 8–10 typed double-spaced pages.

Unit 1 >> Ethical and Legal Aspects of Family Therapy

Introduction

In Unit 1 you will explore state and national codes of ethics, professional standards, and related legal concerns. You will view the first video in a two-part series that will provide additional insights into the legal and ethical area of this profession.

Use this background material to guide you as you delve into the literature to decide what topic you will address for your final project.

Learning Activities

u01s1 - Studies

You may take up to two weeks to complete the activities in this unit.

The studies in this unit are provided to you as a resource for helping you think about and develop your course project. You are expected to read the required readings and incorporate them into your project content and analysis.

Readings

- Read the [AAMFT Code of Ethics](#).

Multimedia

The two-part video, Understanding Confidentiality, Privilege, Reporting and Duty to Warn, is designed to expand your thinking and provide additional insight into ways you might approach your

course project. In Part 1, you will learn about the differences between privileged and confidential information, duty to warn, and reporting standards.

- View [Understanding Confidentiality, Privilege, Reporting and Duty to Warn Part 1](#).

Optional Readings

The optional readings in course materials are drawn from textbooks and articles you have had in previous courses. Use them according to how well they support your chosen project.

u01a1 - Topic Approval

In this assignment, you will identify a topic for your final project research paper in this course.

As you consider topics, keep in mind the competencies you intend to develop through your work in this course, as well as any specific state requirements you will need to address.

As a reminder, you will be demonstrating your ability to:

- Conduct a review of ethics, professional standards, and legal aspects within a chosen area in family therapy.
- Design research that will contribute to the formation of best-practice strategies for delivering culturally sensitive and ethically sound services to family therapy clients.
- Communicate your research in a manner that is scholarly, professional, and consistent with expectations for members of the marriage and family therapy profession.

Questions to Consider

The following questions do not have to be formally addressed but are provided to help you think through your research paper topic selection.

- Think about your state's limits to confidentiality. Do any of the vignettes pertain to your area of practice?
- How is privileged communication defined?
- How is a duty to warn or protect defined and what are the limitations?
- How are ethical complaints handled?

- What aspect of the state government is responsible for licensure and would any of the vignettes prevent you from gaining licensure as a marriage and family therapist?
- How do the scope of practices differ among the noted professions?

Assignment Instructions

- In a 1–2 page paper, identify the topic you wish to research and provide the rationale for your choice by identifying the relevant literature.
- Explain how the proposed research will potentially benefit a client population and contribute to evidence-based practice already noted in the literature.
- You will not have to develop a methodology for the research; however, you will need to locate an article that has already identified research that has been conducted, and you will need to discuss that research.
- Describe the potential that exists to contribute to best practice strategies and to culturally sensitive and ethically sound services to clients.

Your paper should be professionally written and consistent with the expectations of the field. In order to achieve this, please do the following:

- Apply current APA reference format.
- Paraphrase to integrate sources, uphold academic honesty, and respect ethnic and cultural diversity.
- Use grammar correctly.

Course Resources

[APA Style and Format](#)

u01d1 - Required Post

Please post a brief introduction about yourself. Make sure you include the state in which you reside. All learners are required to make a discussion post before the end of Week 1 so they are not dropped from the course.

Response Guidelines

No peer responses are required.

u01d2 - Questions About Assignment

You will submit your Unit 1 assignment by the end of Week 2. Please review the course syllabus for all requirements related to this assignment and post any questions you have about the assignment here. Please also review the Faculty Expectations message for instructions about how your assignment should be submitted. If you have any questions about submitting assignments, please list those here and your instructor will respond within 24–48 hours.

Response Guidelines

No peer responses are required.

Unit 2 >> Privilege, Confidentiality, Duty to Warn, and Reporting Standards

Introduction

The importance of confidentiality and privileged communication is evident throughout the profession; however, it is often difficult to distinguish between the two.

In Unit 2 you will continue to explore the impact ethical, legal, and moral decisions can have in your therapeutic practice. You will also continue to explore the differences between privileged and confidential information, duty to warn, and reporting standards.

Learning Activities

u02s1 - Studies

You may take up to two weeks to complete the activities in this unit.

Multimedia

View [Understanding Confidentiality, Privilege, Reporting and Duty to Warn Part 2](#).

To gain insight into your final paper topic selection, continue to consider the following questions:

- Think about your state's confidentiality limits. Do any of the vignettes pertain to your area of practice?
- How is privileged communication defined?
- How is a duty to warn or protect defined and what are the limitations?
- How are ethical complaints handled?
- What aspect of the state government is responsible for licensure, and would any of the vignettes prevent you from gaining licensure?
- How does the scope of practices differ among the noted professions?

In Unit 3, you will submit the bibliography for your final project. After you have received approval on your project topic, you may want to begin work on your bibliography.

As you assemble your bibliography, keep in mind the requirement that your proposed research be mindful of all ethical, legal, and cultural dimensions affecting the desired outcome.

u02d1 - Required Post

Post a brief comment to describe your reactions to the course content and raise any questions you have about the assigned readings. You will need to post this comment by the end of Week 3 to meet the participation requirements for the course.

Response Guidelines

No peer responses are required.

u02d2 - Questions About Assignment

You will submit your Unit 2 assignment by the end of Week 4. Please review the course syllabus for all requirements and post any questions you have about the assignment here. Please also review the Faculty Expectations message for instructions about how your assignment should be submitted. If you have any questions about submitting assignments, please contact your instructor.

Response Guidelines

No peer responses are required.

Unit 3 >> Ethical Violations or Legal Concerns

Introduction

Designing research that will contribute to best practices and strategies when working with family therapy clients can be approached from the standpoint of reviewing the existing research in the field.

Cultural sensitivity, ethically sound values, and knowledge of the law will contribute further to these best practices. This unit will give you an opportunity to further enhance your understanding of what an ethical violation or a legal concern might look like in your future practice as a therapist.

Learning Activities

u03s1 - Studies

You may take up to two weeks to complete the activities in this unit.

Optional Readings

Review the optional list of reading recommendations to determine if there are any references you want to explore for your final project. If you choose to review any of the optional readings, consider

also reviewing the extensive reference lists in the reference sections of those articles.

u03a1 - Referencing the Literature

For this component of your project, you will submit a project bibliography. The bibliography is composed of an outline of your research paper, along with an annotated reference list for your research paper.

Your reference list should encompass all of the following sections of your research paper:

- Introduction.
- Review of Current Literature.
- Research Methods. In this section, you can describe research that has already been conducted.
- Anticipated Findings and Contributions. Answer the question How do you see this working in your future practice, while being mindful of any ethical, legal, and cultural considerations?

As you prepare your outline and annotated reference list, please follow these guidelines:

- Adhere to APA-style guidelines.
- Provide a minimum of 10 empirical references.
- Confirm that any articles you plan to reference in your final paper have been published in the last five years, and represent research conducted to inform your topic area.
- Provide a brief annotation of the content of the article to include foundational knowledge, current practice, and developing trends in the area of inquiry.

Refer to the Family Practice Research Paper course project description for more detailed information about what must be included in your paper.

Course Resources

[APA Style and Format](#)

u03d1 - Required Post

Post a brief comment to describe your reactions to the course content and raise any questions you have about the assigned readings. You will need to post this comment by the end of Week 5 to meet the participation requirements for the course.

Response Guidelines

No peer responses are required.

u03d2 - Questions About Assignment

You will submit your Unit 3 assignment by the end of Week 6. Please review the course syllabus for all requirements and post any questions you have about the assignment here. Please also review the Faculty Expectations message for instructions about how your assignment should be submitted. If you have any questions about submitting assignments, please list those here and your instructor will respond within 24–48 hours.

Response Guidelines

No peer responses are required.

Unit 4 >> Notable Resources

Introduction

You have located a number of references and used these references to write a research proposal that will be due in Unit 5.

This unit will allow you to review and reflect upon some of the references that might continue to serve as resources during your practice as a family therapist.

Finally, this unit provides you with an opportunity to submit a rough draft of your research proposal.

Learning Activities

u04a1 - Draft Research Paper

You may take up to two weeks to complete the activities in this unit.

In this unit, you will submit a draft of an 8–10 page research paper that pertains to the ethical and legal considerations of a topic in the area of family therapy.

In your paper you should:

- Provide a statement on how this paper will meet the needs of your state licensing requirements.
- Describe the proposed research, giving special consideration to how you will address any ethical, legal, and cultural components.
- Identify how this inquiry would substantially benefit the field and the client population.
- Describe how the research would be conducted.
- Write to set the stage for possible future research in your identified area of inquiry—research that would improve the delivery of culturally sensitive and ethically sound services to clients.
- Aim to inform empirically based practice and to identify research methods that can be used to answer clearly formulated research questions about the client population in your topic area.

Sections are to include:

- Title Page.
- Introduction (purpose of the study, need for the study, and questions for research).
- Review of Current Literature (analysis of foundational knowledge, current practices, and developing trends).
- Research Methods. This section may discuss existing research methods located in the literature, or your proposed research methods supported by the literature.
- Anticipated Findings. These findings may include potential benefits to the client population, contributions to the field, or any potential to help formulate best practices or to deliver culturally sensitive and ethically sound services to clients.
- Description of Research. Although you will not conduct the actual research, you will be expected to anticipate and articulate how this new knowledge will benefit the client population you intend to work with.

- APA-style reference list with at least 10 empirical references from within the past 5 years.

Before you submit your paper check to make sure you have: used all resources, properly formatted your paper in APA style, provided appropriate citations throughout the text, and incorporated any feedback you have received from your instructor.

A Note About Grading

In order to provide a useful level of feedback, the scoring criteria for the draft will be more specific than the scoring criteria of the final paper. The instructor will review your draft to comment on the scope and thoroughness of your inquiry. The final paper itself will be scored on how well you have demonstrated the overall competencies of the course.

Please read both scoring guides to understand how the grading on the two papers will differ.

Course Resources

[APA Style and Format](#)

u04d1 - Required Post

Post a brief comment to describe your reactions to the course content and raise any questions you have about the assigned readings. You will need to post this comment by the end of Week 7 to meet the participation requirements for the course.

Response Guidelines

No peer responses are required.

u04d2 - Questions About Assignment

You will submit your Unit 4 assignment by the end of Week 8. Please review the course syllabus for all requirements and post any questions you have about the assignment here. Please also review the Faculty Expectations message for instructions about how your assignment should be submitted. If you have any questions about submitting assignments, please list those here and your instructor will respond within 24–48 hours.

Response Guidelines

No peer responses are required.

Unit 5 >> Summarizing the Value of Ethical and Professional Codes of Conduct

Introduction

Unit 5 is the final unit in this course and a time to reflect on what you have learned.

Preparing yourself to adhere to the ethical and legal aspects of your profession, and to follow the codes of conduct set forth at national and state levels, will facilitate the process of your becoming a licensed family therapist.

Learning Activities

u05a1 - Family Practice Research Paper

You may take up to two weeks to complete the activities in this unit.

Please review any feedback your instructor has given you in your draft paper, and make any recommended changes.

Before you submit the final draft of your 8–10 page research paper, review your paper to make sure you have followed the submission guidelines outlined in Unit 4:

- Provide a statement on how this paper will meet the needs of your state licensing requirements for marriage and family therapy.

- Describe the proposed research, giving special consideration to how you will address any ethical, legal, and cultural components.
- Identify how this inquiry would substantially benefit the field of marriage and family therapy and the client population.
- Describe how the research would be conducted.
- Write to set the stage for possible future research in your identified area of inquiry—research that would improve the delivery of culturally sensitive and ethically sound services to clients.
- Aim to inform empirically based practice, and to identify research methods that can be used to answer clearly formulated research questions about the client population in your topic area.

Sections are to include:

- Title Page.
- Introduction (purpose of the study, need for the study, and questions for research).
- Review of Current Literature (analysis of foundational knowledge, current practices, and developing trends).
- Research Methods. This section may discuss existing research methods located in the literature, or your proposed research methods supported by the literature.
- Anticipated Findings. These findings may include potential benefits to the client population, contributions to the field, or any potential to help formulate best practices or to deliver culturally sensitive and ethically sound services to clients.
- Description of Research. Although you will not conduct the actual research, you will be expected to anticipate and articulate how this new knowledge will benefit the client population you intend to work with.
- APA-style reference list with at least 10 empirical references from within the past 5 years.

Before you submit your paper check to make sure you have: used all resources, properly formatted your paper in APA style, provided appropriate citations throughout the text, and incorporated any feedback you have received from your instructor.

Submit the final draft of your 8–10 page research paper.

Course Resources

[APA Style and Format](#)